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ABSTRACT

Hospitality patterns of the Bororo Indians are illustrated in two examples: the etiquette due to a visiting chief from another Bororo village, and the etiquette due any common visitor from another Bororo village. Formal hospitality differs greatly from the usual etiquette. At a visiting chief's arrival, he enters as the last of his group and waits in a central location until the village chief arrives to have an oral duel with him, which establishes their wisdom and rights; the last to speak is the winner. In this duel the importance of names, titles, ornaments, and other social codes of ownership symbolic of survival is expressed. A common visitor goes to the central plaza and shouts out all his personal names and waits to be invited into the meetingplace of the men's council for a long and detailed interview, focusing on his family's names, in order to be placed properly for eating and sleeping in a home of his name-category ("mother," "father," "godmother," "godfather"). Name categories also determine seating. Every person a Bororo may call by a kinship term is inserted into a system of food, shelter, and gift reciprocity. The origin of the kinship ties is in the tradition that a Bororo is not just a descendant of an ancestor but a representative of a mythological hero associated with the name-category. In naming a child the Bororo attempt not to "lose names." A hierarchy of social prestige is expressed in kin terms. However, naming practices do not reflect any formal kinship system--kinship is a secondary effect of naming practices. (MSE)

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The meaning of the capital letters in the text:

MB = mother's brother
F = father
FF = father's father
FS = father's sister
FSH = father's sister's husband
MBW = mother's brother's wife

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Greeting, Hospitality, and Naming Among the Bororo of Central Brazil

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The Bororo Indians speak a Macro-Gê language. They live in the western part of the Mato Grosso, Brazil. They are about 500 people entrusted to the Indian Protection Service and to the Salesian missionaries. The Bororo are hunters, fishermen, gatherers, and cultivators.

In former times, the Bororo inhabited a huge area very rich in botanical and zoological species. They explored differing ecological patterns and settled down in a great number of large villages. These were formed by one or several concentric circles of huts arranged around the men's houses always located in the middle of their respective central plazas. These plazas called 'bororo' were the place where the great Bororo ceremonies were held.

This paper intends to describe briefly Bororo formal hospitality patterns from two examples: the first, concerning the formal hospitality etiquette due to a visiting chief from another Bororo village; the second, concerning the formal hospitality etiquette due to any common visitor arriving from another Bororo village. Formal hospitality etiquette differs greatly from the usual etiquette among the villagers, expressed by the common greetings of Ituwo (I am leaving) and Itaregodo (I arrived) whenever a villager leaves or reaches a place inside the village or the village itself.

1. The reception due to a visiting chief or the 'greeting among chiefs':

Whenever a formal visit is paid by a certain number of representatives of one Bororo village to another, as may happen during a Bororo funeral, the most important of all the guests, the chief, is the last to enter his hosts' village. He is supposed to wait in the middle of the

central plaza until one of the local chiefs joins him in order to have an oral duel with him. Each chief tries to show more wisdom than the other by means of shouting loudly his titles; how the rights over his personal names, ornaments, spirits, and dances have been established; what the true stories of the Bororo are; and many other subjects. The outcome of the duel depends on who is the last to speak, the winner of the fight.

The training for this kind of oral fight generally occurs between brothers. Big Bororo chiefs, although belonging to differing villages, because of the titles they have the right to receive (such as Uwaboreu - The Owner of the Rattle) consider themselves as brothers since they share the same title. Nevertheless, one representative of the title Uwaboreu may be better than the other, something dramatically emphasized by the 'greeting among chiefs'.

In short, the reception due to a visiting chief expresses the social importance of Bororo personal names, titles, ornaments, and other codes of social ownership connected to human survival since, as shown by the second example, there is a deep connection among personal names, titles (or name-categories), food, and shelter.

2. The reception due to any foreigner:

When entering the village, the foreigner will go directly to the bororo (the central plaza of the village) shouting out loudly all his personal names. He must wait until someone invites him to enter the men's house of that village, the meeting place of the men's council. Disposed in a circular arrangement around the visitor, the members of

the council start a long and detailed enquiry about him - what does he intend to do in the village, what news is there from the village he came from, what are his personal names, what are his father's, mother's, and mother's brother's personal names - in order to put him in the proper place so that he may eat and sleep the right way. In order to solve this problem, Bororo chiefs assembled in the men's house begin with the guest's personal names. The visitor is entitled to receive food from all the food-preparing women in that village whose personal names belong to the same name-category as his own. If there is no representative of this particular name-category available at this moment in that village, he may get food from a female representative of his mother's or his father's name-category.

Concerning shelter, the guest, whenever accompanied by a wife, may sleep in a hut of the periphery. Whenever unaccompanied, he is considered as a bachelor and therefore supposed to sleep in the men's house, in the middle of the village. There, each man, young or old, is supposed to sit, on formal occasions, in such a manner that each representing a more important name-category sits nearer to the central pole of the men's house than that representing a less important name-category. The same pattern is expressed at the formal reception of the visitor, when the members of the men's council sit in a circular arrangement around him, as described above.

Whereas there is an opposition between peripheral and central areas of the Bororo village in terms of shelter, there is a hierarchy of the sitting places in the men's house also used for the communal meals held only by men and the manufacture of feather ornaments, made

only by men. Besides their utmost importance for the morphology of the Bororo village, food, shelter, and ornaments represent also the core features of Bororo kinship.

Every human being who the Bororo may address by a kin term is supposed to be inserted in the system of food, shelter, and gift reciprocity. The interesting point consists exactly in describing how the Bororo start to build a kinship tie. Their point of departure is represented by the personal names belonging to one or more name-categories with which every living Bororo has been bestown at early childhood. The child enters the social system not as a descendent from a certain ancestor but as a living representative of a mythological hero, a Bororo title or name-category, associated with a cluster of personal names which reflect the hero's deeds as they are told in Bororo myths. Among the Bororo there are many of these heroes, each one associated with a certain place in the village and with certain social species (animals, plants, minerals, spirits, ornaments, dances, songs, names, etc.). Since the Bororo conceive their ideal model of the village in terms of a circular arrangement of the differing titles or name-categories and since each one of these titles is associated with a certain amount of social prestige, the bestowal of an individual with a personal name is a revealing index of the individual's social status inside the village. Once the hierarchy of relative prestige is established, the background for kin term usages has been built. So, for instance, one calls a man one's 'older brother' because the man's name-category is in an 'older-brother' relationship to one's own name-category. One calls a man one's 'maternal uncle' or

'grandfather' because he is the living representative of a name-category which is much more important, older than one's own. Therefore, Bororo kinship is not based upon kinship relationships among individuals but upon kinship relationships among personal names and titles ceremonially given to the individuals. How do these kinship ties among names and titles come about?

In order to explain this, it is necessary to point out that there is no need of any overlap between the kinship relationships among individuals and the kinship relationships among personal names and name-categories, mainly if there are no favorable demographic conditions in the villages.

In choosing a name for a child, the experts in Bororo affairs, the chiefs, try always 'not to lose names'. This policy may sometimes further the social ascension of an individual by means of a title or personal name he or she has been given by a great chief in order to be remembered by everyone in the village. This fact has its consequences in terms of kin term usages since they have to adapt to the social context of enhanced social prestige.

The hierarchy of social prestige is expressed by means of kin terms, the point of reference of which is not found in relationships among living individuals but in ceremonial relationships among name-categories ('mother', 'father', 'godmother', 'godfather' name-categories) the living representative of which do perform the naming ceremony on behalf of a particular child in order to make it grow strong and wise. Therefore, the name-category of the nominated individual is in a 'child' ('son' or 'daughter') relationship or 'godchild' relationship to a particular cluster of other

name-categories. By shouting out his personal names and titles in a strange Bororo village, the individual reminds the villagers about the social solidarity once shown by his ceremonial kin at his early childhood in his natal village, demanding at least a minimum of social solidarity from the local representatives of his 'mother's', 'father's', 'godmother's', or 'godfather's' name category, encharged to feed and shelter the visitor. Therefore, every living representative of a kin-name-category is addressed by the corresponding kin term: the local living representatives of the 'godfather' name-category are all addressed by the term 'godfather' (MB, FF); the local living representatives of 'father' name-category are all addressed by the term 'father' (F, FBH), etc. The working of this strategy is efficient since every Bororo village has its structure based upon the circular model of Bororo name-categories so that however unknown a Bororo village may be for the visitor, there will always be at least one local representative of at least one of the name-categories ceremonially linked to his own. There is always a 'mother', or a 'father', a 'godmother' (FS, MBW) or a 'godfather', remembering their duties towards their 'child' or 'godchild' (grandchild, nephew/niece).

Furthermore, among the Bororo Indians, the principle of relative age cannot be taken for granted when dealing with the kinship system since it must be understood in terms of the proper cultural context: Bororo naming practices. Since Bororo naming practices do not reflect any formal kinship system, it could easily be sustained that Bororo kinship is a kind of secondary effect of their naming practices.

Wearing his ornaments and shouting out his personal names, the Bororo may step over the frontiers of an unknown village in Bororoland and may be introduced into the local web of kinship, and therefore share food and shelter just like any other villager. The two examples concerning formal hospitality suggest the utmost importance of personal names and titles among the Bororo, widely accepted throughout their territory as efficient codes of social identification. Although the nonverbal code based upon the relative size, colours, and motives of Bororo feather ornaments associated with the naming ceremonies is disappearing because of the lack of raw material and the diffusion of clothing, and in spite of the contact with whites, Bororo personal names and name-categories go on as their most important codes of social classification. The importance of personal names can be understood clearly if we recall that, in the good old times, any foreigner without a personal name to shout out or a gift to bring for the villagers was summarily killed as an enemy since there can be no hospitality for someone not able to demonstrate the sounds and the colours of Bororo humanity. In sum, this paper shows the relationship between Bororo naming practices and ceremonial or ritual greetings between individuals from different villages. By means of the greeting, individuals announce their names and therefore their place in the Bororo social structure, crucial to their survival.